

THE UTILIZATION OF EU FUNDS IN THE YEARS 2007–2015 FOR THE PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE OF RURAL AREAS IN EASTERN POLAND

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ABSTRACT

The article presents the problems of financing cultural heritage of rural areas from the European Union funds in the macroregion of Eastern Poland. It outlines the scale and structure of the use of the EU funds for projects relating to the protection and promotion of cultural heritage. It also describes the scale of regional differentiation in the field of the use of European Funds for the protection of cultural heritage in rural areas. The temporal range of the study included the years from 2007 to 2015. The analysis was conducted across the six types of projects distinguished according to their subject matter, that is to say the promotion of natural values, protection and valorization of natural heritage, other forms of support for the enhancement of tourism services, protection and preservation of cultural heritage, development of cultural infrastructure, other forms of support for the improvement of cultural services, as well as integrated projects for the revitalization of urban and rural areas. The analysis focused on four types of areas: rural areas, towns with county rights, voivodship towns and the area of the voivodship. The information used in this study was based on the data pertaining to the projects co-financed from the EU funds and stored in the National Information System (KSI SIMIK 07-13) as of 31 December 2016.

Key words: Eastern Poland, rural areas, cultural heritage, European funds

INTRODUCTION

One of the main elements of the EU Cohesion Policy is the support for the development of peripheral areas. In Poland, this region comprises five voivodships of Eastern Poland which are among the least developed regions in the European Union (EU). They constitute an external peripheral region, not only in Poland but also in the entire EU [Zarycki 2011]. The peripheral character of Eastern Poland has a geographical dimension stemming from its considerable distance from the domestic and continental economic and political centres, as well as an economic dimension, which is associated with a low level of economic development. The concentration of negative social and economic phenomena and the ensuing weakest economic performance especially applies to the areas situated along Poland's eastern border [Stawicki 2012].

Structural intervention of the EU and the resulting allocation of assistance resources are directed towards lessening the distance between Eastern Poland and the remaining regions of the country. Financial resources from the EU Structural Funds came to be an important source of support for the socio-economic development of Eastern Poland [Szlachta 2013]. They made it possible for the country to undertake many-sided activities

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intended to promote economic growth, primarily through increasing the level of the use of factors inherent in the local environment of the regions. Eastern Poland, and especially its rural areas, is a region with a rich cultural heritage, which is a legacy of a multi-cultural character of the area [Kruczek 2011a]. The use of cultural values in Eastern Poland is likely to contribute to the development of new social and economic functions, first of all tourism, and indirectly, according to the multiplier effect [Gralak 2008], this should be reflected in some other economic activities, including food production, provision of equipment for accommodation facilities, development of tourism and tourism-related services, etc. Thus, cultural landscape of rural areas of Eastern Poland, being the effect of long-lasting development processes, makes it possible for the region to develop new socio-economic functions of Eastern Poland.

The main purpose of the paper is to examine the level of the use of the EU funds for preservation, promotion and development of cultural heritage in the rural areas of Eastern Poland. In order to realize the main goal, the following set of detailed goals was adopted:

- determination of the share of undertakings in the field of cultural heritage in the value of total EU funds allocation, with special reference to rural areas;
- determination of the share of the selected types of areas in the allocation of financial resources for the protection of cultural heritage;
- examination of the scale of regional differentiation in the field of the use of the EU funds for the protection of cultural heritage in rural areas;
- identification of the scope of the projects accomplished.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

One of the key concepts, from the point of view of the topic under study, is cultural heritage. Its semantic scope encompasses both cultural identifiers of the sites and the natural goods, being the points of reference of identity and landscape [Kruczek 2011b]. Cultural heritage includes both material and immaterial forms of culture transmitted from generation to generation by the residents of the particular region. In the cultural landscape which was shaped in the historical process there is much evidence of distant past epochs and events. Cultural goods being the carriers of material and non-material values of the region are of particular importance.

The subject matter of the analysis was the financial support from the EU funds for the preservation of cultural heritage. The temporal scope of the study covered the years 2007–2015, since under the so-called $n + 2$ rule the EU financial resources in the 2007–2013 programming period were subject to spending by the end of 2015. On the other hand, the spatial extent of the analysis included the macroregion of Eastern Poland, which encompassed five voivodships: Warmińsko-mazurskie, Podlaskie, Lubelskie, Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie.

The research material was provided by the data concerning the projects co-financed by the European Union, collected in the National Information System (KSI SIMIK 07-13) as of 31 December 2016 (<http://www.funduszeuropejskie.2007-2013.gov.pl>). From the scope of the available variables we selected the data which allowed us to identify the usefulness of the projects for the present analysis, that is to say the title and location of project realization (voivodship, county or commune). These undertakings were financed through the budgets of five Regional Operational Programmes (ROP) and two national programmes: Infrastructure and Environment as well as Innovative Economy Operational Programmes. The basis for the analysis were the following categories: number of projects, total value of the projects and the amount of co-funding from the EU funds.

The survey sample was chosen using the method of purposive selection. The criterion for selection was the eligibility of the projects within the framework of seven priority interventions, which concerned, either directly or indirectly, the protection of cultural heritage. The titles of the topics were as follows: promotion of natural values, protection and valorization of natural heritage, other forms of support for the enhancement of tourism

services, protection and preservation of cultural heritage, development of cultural infrastructure, other forms of support for the improvement of culture services, integrated projects for revitalization of urban and rural areas. The projects covering the above-mentioned thematic fields were analyzed from the perspective of their scope which led to the selection of those projects which were directly related to cultural heritage. The method of selection adopted in this study resulted in the survey sample comprising 498 projects.

A wide range of projects implemented in Eastern Poland and concerning the protection of cultural heritage made us group them according to their scope¹. The following types of projects were distinguished:

- renovation (repair, conservation and adaptation) of historic buildings;
- revitalization of urban and rural areas;
- natural heritage (landscape objects, health resorts, botanical and zoological gardens, etc.);
- cultural events (festivals, music concerts, performances, exhibitions, stage productions, etc.);
- promotion of cultural values;
- others (including historic trails, construction and rebuilding of the objects of the institutions of culture and cultural heritage).

An important aspect of the study was the analysis of the structure of projects across space. To this end, the areas in which projects were implemented were classified by type of the territorial self-government units (rural communes, urban-rural communes, urban communes, counties, towns with county rights, and voivodships) [Rakowska 2012]. Projects implemented in rural, and urban-rural communes as well as in small towns and counties were considered as having a significant influence on the preservation of cultural heritage of rural areas. The latter were presented against a background of other types of areas, such as: towns with county rights, voivodship towns (that is to say towns being the voivodship capitals), as well as the area of the voivodship in which regional projects were realized [Rakowska 2013]. This classification allowed us to conduct a comparative analysis of the allocation of European Union financial resources to rural areas in Eastern Poland *vis-à-vis* the remaining types of areas.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In the years 2007–2015, more than 18.5 thousand EU co-financed projects were realized in Eastern Poland (excluding the projects carried out under the Human Capital Operational Programme), from which 498 projects were designed for the purposes related to the preservation of cultural heritage. Taking into consideration the fact that solely 2.6% of the total number of projects concerned cultural heritage, it should be said that the potential of cultural values was not among the major purposes of the European projects accomplished. This is also confirmed by the data relating to the total value of the projects and the value of the EU co-funded projects. In the total value of the projects implemented in Eastern Poland, amounting to more than 99.3 billion PLN, only 2.3 billion PLN was comprised of the expenditure on projects which were thematically related to cultural heritage. A similar relation is shown by the comparison of the value of co-funding for all projects in relation to the cultural heritage projects (56.5 billion compared to 1.4 billion PLN). The share of the EU funds allocated to the purposes relating to the preservation of cultural heritage in Eastern Poland was similar to that in the Mazowieckie Voivodship [Powęska 2016].

¹ The topics of the projects analyzed in the study included: revitalization, conservation, renovation, restoration, preservation and adaptation of historic buildings and areas for future cultural uses; protection, preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage objects and of historic objects; conservation and safeguarding of museum collections, archives, old prints and other tangible memorials; safeguarding of monuments against theft and destruction; adaptation of cultural heritage objects to meet the needs of disabled people; creation of the information systems and organization of cultural events of regional importance (for example, festivals, fairs, etc).

It is worthwhile emphasizing a relatively small scale of disproportions regarding the value of the projects. An average value of the project accomplished in Eastern Poland totalled around 5.4 million PLN, while the value of the EU co-funding amounted to 3 million PLN; however, as per one project relating to the protection of cultural heritage these values totalled about 4.6 million and 2.8 million PLN respectively, thus being 14 and 7 percentage points lower (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. The number and the total value of projects in the voivodships of Eastern Poland in the years 2007–2015

Specification	Number of projects		Value of the projects		Amount of co-funding from the EU funds	
			total	for 1 project	total	for 1 project
	total	%	thousand PLN			
Lubelskie	5 421	29.2	22 135 885.1	4 083.4	13 165 266.4	2 428.6
Podkarpackie	4 929	26.6	29 683 203.2	6 022.2	16 640 584.2	3 376.1
Podlaskie	2 085	11.2	14 674 044.5	7 037.9	7 383 574.4	3 541.3
Świętokrzyskie	2 391	12.9	13 077 675.2	5 469.5	7 516 426.9	3 143.6
Warmińsko-mazurskie	3 727	20.1	19 769 552.9	5 304.4	11 796 890.4	3 165.3
Eastern Poland in total	18 553	100.0	99 340 360.9	5 354.4	56 502 742.2	3 045.5

Source: Own elaboration based on KSI SIMIK 07-13 as of 31 December 2016.

Table 2. The number and the total value of cultural heritage projects in the voivodships of Eastern Poland in the years 2007–2015

Specification	Number of projects		Value of the projects		Amount of co-funding from the EU funds	
			total	for 1 project	total	for 1 project
	total	%	thousand PLN			
Lubelskie	94	18.9	624 403.7	6 642.6	396 271.8	4 215.7
Podkarpackie	104	20.9	402 165.3	3 867.0	258 907.4	2 489.5
Podlaskie	27	5.4	93 853.5	3 476.1	66 674.0	2 469.4
Świętokrzyskie	155	31.1	642 255.3	4 143.6	393 240.3	2 537.0
Warmińsko-mazurskie	118	23.7	532 886.4	4 516.0	290 709.9	2 463.6
Eastern Poland in total	498	100.0	2 295 564.2	4 609.6	1 405 803.5	2 822.9

Source: Own elaboration based on KSI SIMIK 07-13 as of 31 December 2016.

Among five voivodships of Eastern Poland there were significant differences in respect of both the number and the total value, as well as the value of the EU co-funding for projects concerning cultural heritage (Table 2). Most of such projects were accomplished in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship (31.1%). This was also the leading region in terms of the total value and of the amount of the EU co-funding (28% each). Although the Lubelskie Voivodship realized much fewer projects (18.9%), their total value as well as the EU co-funding (27.2 and 8.2%

respectively) were very similar to the level of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship. However, the weakest position in the field under study was occupied by the Podlaskie Voivodship. Its share in the number of projects totalled barely 5.4%, and its share in the value of projects amounted to 4.1%, while its share in the value of the EU co-funding totalled 4.7%. This was the result, first of all, of the lack of revitalization projects in this region, since under the Regional Operational Programme of the Podlaskie Voivodship for the years 2007–2013 no actions were taken under any of the priority axes, and, hence, no financial resources were allocated to the revitalization of degraded areas.

While analyzing the structure of projects in the spatial cross-section one can observe a clear-cut dominance of rural areas. This applied both to the share in terms of the number of projects and of their total value, as well as in terms of the value of the EU co-funding for the projects (Fig. 1).

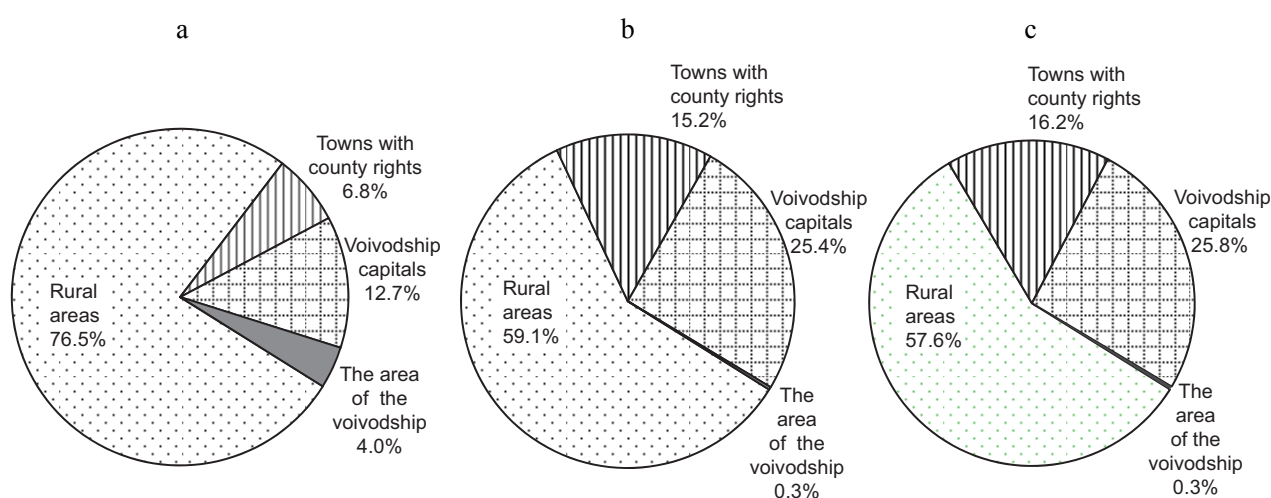


Fig. 1. The structure of cultural heritage projects in the macroregion of Eastern Poland in the years 2007–2015 by type of area: a – number of projects, b – total value of the projects, c – the amount of co-funding from the EU funds

Source: Own elaboration based on KSI SIMIK 07-13 as of 31 December 2016.

In the rural areas of Eastern Poland more than three-fourths of all projects related to the protection of cultural heritage were accomplished; also, around 1.4 billion PLN was allocated to the projects, which constituted almost 60% of financial resources earmarked for this purpose. Therefore the relationship between rural areas and the highly urbanized areas (towns with county rights and voivodship towns) in terms of the number of implemented projects totalled 4 : 1; however, in terms of the value of projects it amounted only to 1.5 : 1 and in terms of the value of the EU co-funding it totalled 1.4 : 1. One should emphasize here that an average value of a project in rural areas was much lower than that in the remaining types of areas. An average value of the project implemented in rural areas amounted to some 3.6 million PLN, while in the remaining types of areas it totalled 8 million PLN; therefore, the disproportion in this regard was greater than twofold. At the same time, the highest values across the entire region of Eastern Poland were observed in the towns with county rights (10.3 million PLN) and in the voivodship capitals (9.2 million PLN). Across voivodships the highest average project value was recorded in the capital city of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship, that is to say in Kielce (17.5 million PLN), as well as in the towns with county rights of the Lubelskie Voivodship (13.9 million PLN). On the other hand, with respect to the areas the Warmińsko-mazurskie Voivodship was the leading region in Poland (4.3 million PLN), while the Podlaskie Voivodship was ranked last (2.7 million PLN).

The number of cultural heritage projects varied greatly depending on the type of the area (Table 3). A very clear-cut concentration of the projects implemented in rural areas was observed in two voivodships: Świętokrzyskie and Podkarpackie – 88 and 84% respectively. In the three remaining voivodships of Eastern Poland the share of rural areas reached approximately 66%. On the average, every fifth project (19.5%) was realized in a highly urbanized area (towns with county rights and voivodship towns), and a relatively highest number of such projects (by region) was recorded in the Lubelskie Voivodship (35.1%) and in the Podlaskie Voivodship (33.3%). Only a very small number of projects covered the whole region: their share at the macroregional level reached barely 4%.

Table 3. The number and structure of cultural heritage projects in the voivodships of Eastern Poland in the years 2007–2015 by type of area

Specification	Number of projects	The structure of projects by types of areas				total
		rural areas	towns with county rights	voivodship capitals	the area of the voivodship	
%						
Lubelskie	94	64.9	13.8	21.3	0.0	100.0
Podkarpackie	104	83.7	9.6	3.8	2.9	100.0
Podlaskie	27	66.7	14.8	18.5	0.0	100.0
Świętokrzyskie	155	88.4	1.3	5.2	5.2	100.0
Warmińsko-mazurskie	118	66.1	4.2	22.0	7.6	100.0
Eastern Poland in total	498	76.5	6.8	12.7	4.0	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on KSI SIMIK 07-13 as of 31 December 2016.

The largest amount of funds for projects associated with the protection of cultural heritage was allocated to the rural areas of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship (482 million PLN). In terms of the share of rural areas in the total value of this type of projects two voivodships ranked the highest, namely Świętokrzyskie Voivodship (75%) and Podkarpackie Voivodship (69.5%).

Almost 58% of the value of the EU co-funding for the projects regarding the protection of cultural heritage was allocated to rural areas in Eastern Poland (Fig. 2). As regards the structure of the value of the EU co-funding by type of areas, a high level of differentiation between voivodships was observed.

The amount of the EU co-funding for projects relating to the protection of cultural heritage, which was spent in rural areas in the particular voivodships was as follows: Świętokrzyskie Voivodship – 279 million PLN, Podkarpackie Voivodship – 181 million PLN, Warmińsko-mazurskie Voivodship – 180 million PLN, Lubelskie Voivodship – 137 million PLN, and Podlaskie Voivodship – 33 million PLN. Therefore, the scale of disproportions between the voivodships in this field was more than eightfold higher. The highest share of rural areas in the value of the EU co-funding acquired by the regions was recorded in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship (71%) and in the Podkarpackie Voivodship (70%). On the other hand, the lowest share of rural areas in the value of the EU co-funding was that of the Lubelskie Voivodship (34.5%), which, as compared to the number of the implemented projects, indicates that the value of co-funding per project was many times lower in rural areas in comparison with other types of areas.

The analysis of the structure of projects concerning cultural heritage according to the total value and according to the value of the EU co-funding shows that small-scale projects prevailed in the rural areas of Eastern Poland (Fig. 3).

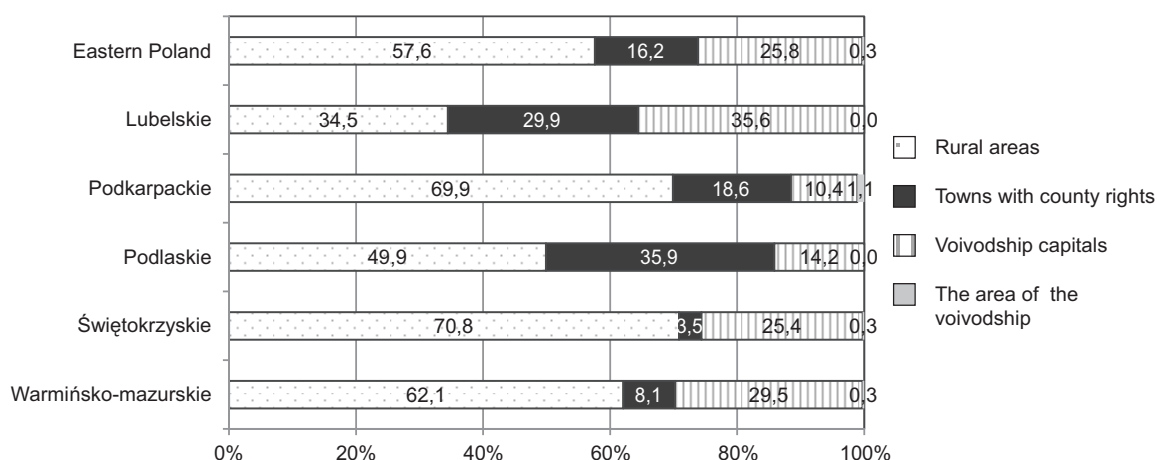


Fig. 2. The structure of the value of the EU co-funding for cultural heritage projects in the voivodships of Eastern Poland in the years 2007–2015 by type of area

Source: Own elaboration based on KSI SIMIK 07-13 as of 31 December 2016.

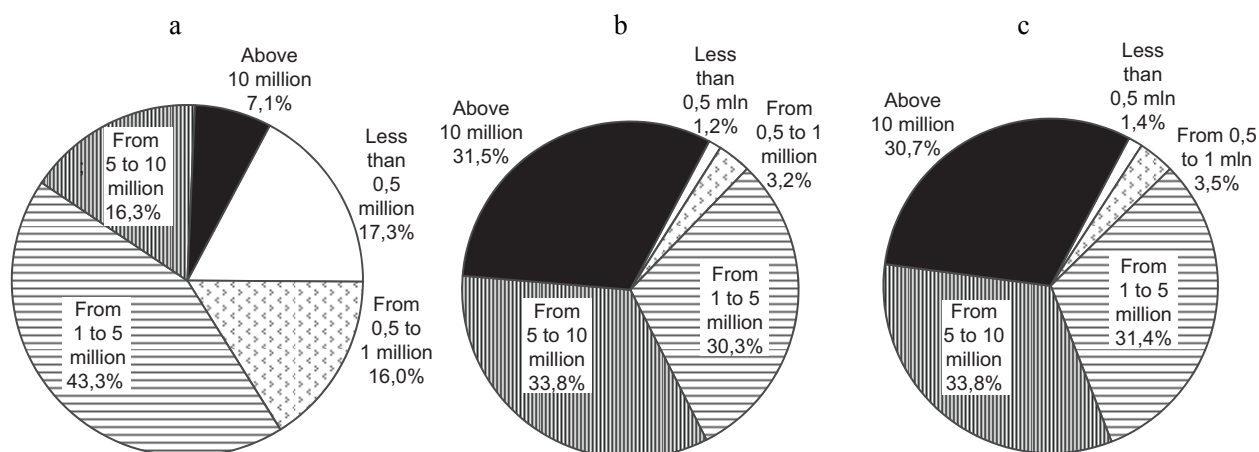


Fig. 3. The structure of cultural heritage projects implemented in rural areas in Eastern Poland in the years 2007–2015 by value of projects: a – number of projects, b – total value of the projects, c – the amount of co-funding from the EU funds

Source: Own elaboration based on KSI SIMIK 07-13 as of 31 December 2016.

The level of differentiation of the value of their budgets ranged from 38.2 thousand to 70.1 million PLN. The budget of every third project was lesser than 1 million PLN. Most projects, as many as 43%, had at their disposal a budget totalling between 1 million and 5 million PLN. The share of large-scale projects (exceeding 10 million PLN) in rural areas reached its lowest level and it totalled 7%. On the other hand, with regard to an aggregate value of the projects, and by the same token to the scale of financial resources allocated to rural areas, the share of small-scale projects (less than 1 million PLN) was insignificant since it amounted to 4.4%. On the other hand, the share of the three remaining groups of projects was relatively even and it ranged between 30 and 33%. The structure of the projects relating to the co-financing through the EU funds was similar.

As already stated earlier, projects implemented in rural areas were considerably smaller than those carried into effect in the highly urbanized areas. At the scale of the macroregion of Eastern Poland an average value of the EU co-funding for the projects in rural areas was nearly three times lower than in large towns. Across the voivodship the highest disproportion in this field to the disadvantage of rural areas was recorded in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship (5.6 : 1), while the lowest one was observed in the Warmińsko-mazurskie Voivodship (1.5 : 1).

Among 498 projects relating to the protection of cultural heritage carried into effect in the macroregion of Eastern Poland, most projects were related to revitalization (41%) and the renovation of historic buildings (36%). Of relatively little importance (5.6%) were projects concerning cultural events, such as festivals, music concerts, performances, exhibitions, stage productions, etc. A few projects were related to the promotion of the values of cultural heritage (6%) and to the areas constituting cultural heritage (3.8%), such as, for example, layouts of scenic parks, botanical and zoological gardens, arboreta, geological objects, etc.

The analysis of the structure of projects implemented in the rural areas of Eastern Poland confirmed a clear-cut dominance of revitalization undertakings (42.5%), the scope of which covered revalorization, conservation, renovation, and restoration of objects and areas of cultural heritage, as well as their adaptation for cultural purposes. Revitalization projects concentrated nearly 60% of the total value of funds allocated to cultural heritage (Table 4). Projects intended to renovate historic buildings were also of great importance (38%).

Table 4. The structure of cultural heritage projects implemented in rural areas in Eastern Poland in the years 2007–2015 by type of project

Specification	Number of projects		Total value of the projects		The amount of co-funding from the EU funds	
	total	%	thousand PLN	%	thousand PLN	%
Renovation of historic buildings projects	144	37.8	350 122.3	25.8	229 028.7	28.3
Revitalization projects	162	42.5	804 789.7	59.3	460 470.4	56.9
Natural heritage projects	15	3.9	50 992.9	3.8	31 051.5	3.8
Cultural events projects	23	6.0	4 492.4	0.3	3 180.2	0.4
Promotion of cultural values projects	8	2.1	9 834.8	0.7	7 216.7	0.9
Others projects	29	7.6	137 112.4	10.1	78 709.8	9.7
Eastern Poland in total	381	100.0	1 357 344.4	100.0	809 657.2	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on KSI SIMIK 07-13 as of 31 December 2016.

The total value of the EU co-funding for cultural heritage projects which were implemented in the rural areas of Eastern Poland amounted to about 810 million PLN. For the most part, these resources were earmarked for revitalization undertakings (57%). Two times smaller financial support was awarded for projects related to the renovation of historic buildings (28%). Around 10% of the EU funds was involved in the realization of “other” projects, which covered, i.a., the topics of historic trails, historic parks, etc. The smallest number of projects and the lowest grants from the EU funds concerned the three remaining types of projects selected for the analysis, that is to say natural heritage (3.8%), promotion of the values of cultural heritage (0.9%) and cultural events (0.4%).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study lead to the following conclusions:

1. The expenditures on the preservation of cultural heritage constituted a small part of the financial resources acquired from the EU funds in the years 2007–2015. Projects related to these topics constituted barely 2.6% of the total number of projects implemented in the macroregion of Eastern Poland and 2.5% of the amount of co-funding through the EU grants. This demonstrates that the preservation of cultural heritage was of minor importance against a background of the main priorities of the structural intervention of the EU in the voivodships of Eastern Poland.
2. The structure of the allocation of financial resources for preservation of cultural heritage according to the types of areas was highly dominated by rural areas which comprised rural communes, small towns and counties. They concentrated about 77% of all projects and nearly 60% of the amount of allocated funds. Also, the value of the projects realized in rural areas was almost three times lower than the value of projects implemented in highly urbanized areas.
3. There were considerable differences between the five voivodships of Eastern Poland, both in terms of the number and of the total value, as well as in terms of the amount of the EU co-funding for cultural heritage projects. The largest number of projects was carried into effect in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship (155), while the smallest number of projects was realized in the Podlaskie Voivodship (27); thus, the scale of differentiation between these voivodships was nearly sixfold. Differences in the value of financial resources for the preservation of cultural heritage between the two regions (Świętokrzyskie and Podlaskie) were almost sevenfold.
4. The structure of the types of projects implemented in the areas of Eastern Poland was clearly dominated by revitalization undertakings and by the projects intended for the renovation of historic buildings. Altogether, they constituted as much as 80% of the total number of cultural heritage projects, 85% of the total value of projects and 85% of the financial resources received from EU funds.

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FINANSOWANIE DZIEDZICTWA KULTUROWEGO OBSZARÓW WIEJSKICH W POLSCE WSCHODNIEJ Z UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ W LATACH 2007–2015

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł prezentuje problematykę finansowania dziedzictwa kulturowego obszarów wiejskich z funduszy Unii Europejskiej w makroregionie Polska Wschodnia. Przedstawiono skalę oraz strukturę wykorzystania funduszy europejskich na przedsięwzięcia związane z ochroną i promocją dziedzictwa kulturowego. Określono również skalę zróżnicowania regionalnego w zakresie wykorzystania funduszy europejskich na ochronę dziedzictwa kulturowego obszarów wiejskich. Zakres czasowy badania obejmował lata 2007–2015. Analizę przeprowadzono w przekroju sześciu typów projektów wyodrębnionych według ich zakresu przedmiotowego, tj.: promowanie walorów przyrodniczych; ochrona i waloryzacja dziedzictwa przyrodniczego; inne wsparcie na rzecz wzmocnienia usług turystycznych; ochrona i zachowanie dziedzictwa kulturowego; rozwój infrastruktury kulturalnej; inne wsparcie dla poprawy usług kulturalnych; zintegrowane projekty na rzecz rewitalizacji obszarów miejskich i wiejskich. Analizę przeprowadzono w układzie czterech typów obszarów: obszary wiejskie, miasta na prawach powiatu, miasta wojewódzkie oraz obszar województwa. Bazę informacyjną badania stanowiły dane dotyczące projektów współfinansowanych ze środków UE, zgromadzone w Krajowym Systemie Informatycznym (KSI SIMIK 07-13) według stanu na 31 grudnia 2016 roku.

Słowa kluczowe: Polska Wschodnia, obszary wiejskie, dziedzictwo kulturowe, fundusze europejskie